

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Monday, September 19, 2005

6:30 P.M.

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time in the Dempsey B. Herring Courthouse Annex Building located at 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina, for their regular scheduled meeting on the third Monday.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Sammie Jacobs, **Chairman**
Kipling Godwin, **Vice Chairman**
Amon E. McKenzie
James E. Prevatte
Bill Memory
Lynwood Norris
David L. Dutton, Jr.

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Jimmy Varner, **Interim County Manager**
June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**
Roxanne Coleman, **Finance Officer**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Darren L. Currie, **Assistant County Manager**

Agenda Items #1 and #2: MEETING CALLED to ORDER and INVOCATION:

At 6:30 P.M., Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order. The invocation was delivered by Ed Worley, Columbus County Aging Director. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Agenda Item #3: PRESENTATION - RETIREMENT PLAQUE for WILLIAM BARRY HERRING:

Chairman Jacobs stated there was a retired employee in the audience the Board would like to recognize for his many years of loyal and dedicated service to the Columbus County Sheriff's Department. The following plaque was presented to William Barry Herring.

**PRESENTED TO
WILLIAM BARRY HERRING
THIS THE 19TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2005
IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION
FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND LOYALTY
TO
COLUMBUS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
April 20, 1976 - August 31, 2005

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Herring stated that from a child, his dream was to be in law enforcement, and his dream had been fulfilled by being able to work at the Columbus County Sheriff's Department, and he truly appreciated the opportunity to do so, and had enjoyed his work.

RECOGNITION of RED CROSS BOARD MEMBERS:

Chairman Jacobs stated he was going to veer away from the Agenda to recognize Ms. JoAnn Rhodes from the Red Cross, and the Red Cross Board members for their endless dedication and loyalty. This is very appropriate, at this time, due to the many hours of service that has been given by this organization during the recent disasters that have been experienced. I would like to recognize Ms. JoAnn Rhodes for the excellent service she has displayed during her tenure with the Columbus County Red Cross.

Ms. JoAnn Rhodes stated the following:

1. We truly appreciate the space Columbus County has provided our organization in the past, present and hopefully in the future;
2. We have been operating out of the basement of the old hospital building and have been flooded out three (3) times;
3. We help many people during crucial times in their lives; **and**
4. We are requesting the Board of County Commissioners to consider locating a place to house

the Columbus County Red Cross which has easy access for everyone and will not flood every time we have a substantial amount rainfall.

Commissioner Memory stated the Columbus County Board of Commissioners would take this matter under careful advisement, and the following would serve as a Board Directive: a committee to be formed which will include Jimmy Varner, Interim County Manager, Leroy Sellers, Maintenance Director, and the Columbus County Red Cross Board members to meet and decide on a suitable location for the organization to be located, and bring their suggestion back to the Board for consideration.

In addition, Juvenile Court Counseling is located in the same basement as the Columbus County Red Cross., and they may need to be re-located also, and may need to be included in this committee.

Vice Chairman Godwin stated he wanted Leroy Sellers, Maintenance Director, to look at possible solutions to the flooding in the basement area in order to utilize the space there that was available for a more suitable use.

Ms. Rhodes stated she would like to recognize the Board members that were present at this meeting. We have Dr. Blanks, Ms. Louise Mills and Mr. Haywood McKoy present.

Chairman Jacobs asked if the Columbus County Red Cross Board members would like to make any comments. The following comments were made.

1. **Dr. Blanks:** I have the same agenda as our Director, and I fully support Ms. Rhodes. We work for a very worthwhile organization who helps many people, and truly need all the help we can get from anyone, and a better location to carry out our jobs.
2. **Haywood McKoy:** I would like to emphasize the importance of our work, and the desperate need this organization has in being placed in a more suitable location that will prevent interruption in the flow of our work.
3. **Louise Mills:** I concur with the previous members as to the importance of our work and the great need that exists for a better location to enable us to carry out our function without unexpected interruptions.

Chairman Jacobs stated he would like to recognize all the staff of the Columbus County Red Cross for all the help they have rendered toward helping people in their time of need.

Agenda Item #4: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

Commissioner Memory made a motion to table, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #5: TARHEEL MONITORING, LLC - PRESENTATION of ELECTRONIC MONITORING and CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES:

Commissioner Memory made a motion to table due to Mr. Mark Cartret being out-of-town, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #6: HEALTH - APPROVAL of HOME HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM APPROPRIATION and INFORMATION SERVICES AGREEMENT:

Kim Smith, Health Department Director, requested Board approval of the Information System Appropriation and the Information Services Agreement.

Ms. Smith stated the following:

1. The present computer software at the Health Department was purchased in 1982 and it is DOS based;
2. By the year 2007, we have been informed that Health Departments will be required to supply the same information as hospitals do regarding patients and/or clients;
3. The present system we have will not supply us with the information we need;
4. Out of several presentations that have been made, we have chosen CareAnyware for the

- software and hardware we need to bring our system up-to-date;
5. The total cost of implementation of the new system is as follows:
 - A. Software - \$228,400.00
 - B. Hardware - \$ 45,363.12
 - C. Training - \$ 900.00
 - TOTAL: \$274,663,.12
 6. This has been approved by the Columbus County Board of Health at our August 31, 2005 Meeting, and has been approved in the Commissioners Finance Committee on September 6, 2005; **and**
 7. After implementation of this system, there will be a monthly and/or annual fee for the updates to the system.

Commissioner McKenzie asked Ms. Smith if this amount of money was appropriated in her Budget. Ms. Smith replied stating we have carry-over money to cover this amount.

Commissioner Memory stated the Finance Committee had approved this expenditure and this system would allow for Medicare and Medicaid dollars to be turned into the County quicker.

Commissioner Prevatte stated this new system would allow for field notes to be entered onsite, and after twenty-three (23) years, the present system is outdated.

Commissioner Norris stated the money is being well spent, and the ladies in Home Health worked very hard.

Chairman Jacobs stated Steve Smith with Interim Healthcare requested to speak on this matter. Mr. Smith stated the following:

1. I would like to talk about what this new system is not;
2. This is a good system and I have demonstrated it myself;
3. I am addressing you as a taxpayer and as a private citizen;
4. The Columbus County Home Health should relinquish its Certificate of Need;
5. County Government should not be competing with private enterprise for this service;
6. Medicare will not continue to allow as much profit to be made as previously; **and**
7. I am asking the Board of Commissioners to not pass this and consider forming a committee to study the pros and cons of this.

Commissioner Memory stated the following regarding this matter:

1. I know the County is competing with private enterprise for this service;
2. The money from this service helps keep our tax rate down for the benefit of our citizens;
3. There will only be a small drop in the Medicare/Medicaid funds; **and**
4. The income the County receives from this service is necessary to help all of our citizens.

Vice Chairman Godwin asked Mr. Smith, if we should decide to divest in these services, would the hardware and software increase the value. Mr. Smith replied stating there would be no difference.

Commissioner McKenzie stated that Mr. Smith has presented a good report.

Jim Varner, Interim County Manager, stated the Davidson County comparison was not a good one, because its home health agency was losing money.

Commissioner Norris made a motion to approve the appropriation of two hundred seventy-four thousand, six hundred sixty-three, and 12/100 (\$274,663.12) dollars for the Columbus County Home Health Information System, and the Information Services Agreement with CareAnyware, LLC, seconded by Commissioner Memory. The motion so carried. Due to the length of this document, a copy of the Information Services Agreement will be kept on file in the Minute Book Attachments #2, Exhibit "A", for review.

Agenda Item #7: PROCLAMATION - FAMILY DAY PROCLAMATION - 2005:

Greta Sellers, Community Resource Coordinator, Families First, Incorporated, is requesting Board approval and adoption of the following Proclamation.

FAMILY DAY
PROCLAMATION
September 26, 2005

WHEREAS, the use of illegal drugs and the abuse of alcohol and nicotine constitute the greatest threats to the well-being of America's children; **and**

WHEREAS, surveys conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University have consistently found that the more often children and teenagers eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink and use illegal drugs; **and**

WHEREAS, teenagers who virtually never eat dinner with their families are seventy-two (72%) percent more likely than the average teenager to use illegal drugs, alcohol and cigarettes; **and**

WHEREAS, the correlation between family dinners and reduced risk for teen substance abuse are well documented; **and**

WHEREAS, parental influence is known to be one of the most crucial factors in determining the likelihood of substance abuse by teenagers; **and**

WHEREAS, family dinners have long constituted a substantial pillar of family life in America.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim September 26, 2005 as "*Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children*" in Columbus County, and call upon all citizens to recognize and participate in its observance.

ADOPTED this the 19th day of September, 2006.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
 /s/ **SAMMIE JACOBS, Chairman**

ATTESTED BY:
 /s/ **JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board**

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve and adopt the Family Day Proclamation (2005) seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #8: DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE - PUBLIC UTILITIES:

Leroy Sellers, Public Utilities Director, delivered the following update to the Board.

1. In the past year, we have seen a moderate amount of growth;
2. We have eleven (11) employees, three (3) of which are office staff that collect payments, set up new accounts and serve as secretaries paying bills for the Maintenance and Water Department;
3. Completed eight-hundred sixty-six (866) work orders, approximately three hundred twenty-five (325) locates, and repaired a multitude of broken mains and cut service lines;
4. Installed new services of our own to bring in new customers;
5. With the addition of Water District I and Acme Delco Water systems, we now have nine (9) separate systems encompassing three hundred fifty (350) miles of water line to be tested and logged daily;
6. In the process of extending water lines in District I, III and IV;
7. Set up an on-call rotation to answer emergency calls and test the nine (9) entry points every day and on weekends;
8. All customers should have received an annual C.C.R. Report which show most of the one hundred fifty (150) tests taken yearly;
9. All of the nine (9) separate systems requires these tests, and do not included the chlorine test we perform daily throughout the system;
10. We currently have one (1) person that goes to different points in the system daily and test water quality and chlorine. The duties should decrease as customer usage increases;
11. Constantly cleaning around hydrants valve markers, currently have all of our mains marked

- on the highway and soon we will have G.P.S. on all valves; **and**
12. We are very proud to be in the new Water Office with the drive-through service which has been a big success.

Commissioner McKenzie stated that Water Districts I, II and IV have signs which state their correct name and the sign in Water District III lists Western Prong, and why is that. I would also like to know the status of the Ransom situation. Mr. Sellers replied stating that sign should be changed and he would check into this matter. The Ransom situation is coming along nicely and will soon be finished, and also the Pridgen Acres and Red Hill Road Projects are progressing nicely.

Commissioner Memory asked Mr. Sellers the status of the Delco Project. Mr. Sellers replied stating this project is finished and the customers are using the water.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICT III BOARD MEETING:

At 7:15 P.M., Commissioner Dutton made a motion to recess Regular Session and enter into a Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Memory. The motion so carried.

This information will be recorded in Minute Book 1 of the Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Board.

ADJOURN COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICT III BOARD MEETING and resume REGULAR SESSION:

At 7:17 P.M., Commissioner Dutton made a motion to adjourn Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Board Meeting and resume Regular Session, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #10: PERSONNEL - STATE LOCAL SALARY REPORTING PLAN 2005-2006:

Virginia Taylor, Human Resources Director, requested a one (1) time lump-sum payment for the amount of increase received for employees on Step 20 to comply with State Regulations.

Ms. Taylor stated the following:

1. A Salary Report has to be mailed to the State annually for the Health Department and the Social Services Department;
2. We have some employees which have exceeded Step 20 which is the last step on the Pay Plan;
3. In lieu of dropping steps from the Pay Plan at the beginning and adding steps at the end, I recommend that we make a one (1) time lump-sum payment, annually, for the amount of increase for the employees who have exceeded Step 20, in order to comply with the State Regulations;
4. This will prevent the confusion that has resulted in the previous years; **and**
5. This report is due on October 1, 2005.

Jim Varner, Interim County Manager, stated this would involve nine (9) employees at the cost of eighteen thousand, three hundred twenty, and 00/100 (\$18,320.00) dollars.

Commissioner Memory made a motion to approve the one (1) time lump-sum payment of eighteen thousand, three hundred twenty, and 00/100 (\$18,320.00) for nine (9) employees who have exceeded Step 20 on the existing Pay Plan, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #11: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

Vice Chairman Godwin made a motion to table this item, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion so carried.

INTRODUCTION of STEVE COX, NEW COLUMBUS COUNTY PLANNER:

Jim Varner, Interim County Manager, stated it was a pleasure to introduce Steve Cox as the new Columbus County Planner which came on board on September 12, 2005. Mr. Cox is a graduate of Wake Forest University, he received his Masters in Saint Louis, his family is from Clinton, North Carolina and he has lots of field experience.

Steve Cox, Columbus County Planner, stated he was very excited to be offered this position, we have lots of work that needs to be done and I am available to help anyone that I can.

AGENDA ADD-ON:

CONTRACT - APPROVAL of HEALTH PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT:

Jim Varner, Interim Columbus County Manager, requested Board approval of a Health Professional Contract, by and between the County of Columbus and Dr. W. Fred Obrecht, MD, for services as the Columbus County Medical Director.

Commissioner Memory made a motion to approve the Health Professional Contract, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion so carried. This document will be on file in Minute Book Attachments #2, in the Office of the Clerk to the Board, for review.

Agenda Item #12: COMMENTS:

Chairman Jacobs opened the floor for comments that anyone would like to make. The following people spoke.

a. **Public:**

1. **Robert Adams:** stated the following:

- I would like for the Board of Commissioners to listen to the minority people on the scattered site housing grants;
- I am requesting that these grants be scrutinized more closely; **and**
- I think you could fix more houses for the amount of money you have in these grants if they were monitored closely.

Jim Varner, Interim County Manager, stated he would like for the public citizens to help police these grants due to the fact they are in these areas more than we are, and their input would be very beneficial and appreciated.

Commissioner Dutton stated he really appreciated Mr. Varner's contributions.

2. **Lofton Cox:** stated the following:

- I understand the first \$10 Million loan the County borrowed was used for a very good purpose for the new jail and rebuilding Williams Township School classrooms;
- A lot of talk has been done about a second \$10 Million loan and too much hope is being given to the Williams Auditorium Project; **and**
- I would like to bring to the Commissioners' attention that there are many schools in Columbus County that have priorities and the money for these priorities is not there.

b. **Board of Commissioners:**

1. **Commissioner Memory:** stated the following:

- Recently, a Columbus County Department Head, has been taking the heat for a recent issue dealing with EMS;
- Mr. Varner and the County Attorney have worked out this issue;
- I would like to suggest to the citizens to contact the Board of Commissioners' members before making statements regarding issues of this nature.

2. **Commissioner Dutton:** stated the following:

- Our previous Manager should have handled this situation a year ago; **and**
- I thank Mr. Varner and Steve Fowler for resolving this issue.

3. **Vice Chairman Godwin:** stated I have two (2) issues to discuss as follows:

- A. Columbus County has received a grant from E-NC. This is a Planning Grant for a

TeleCenter in Tabor City. We are having a very important meeting on September 29, 2005, at Southeastern Community College, at 8:30 A.M. until 12:00 Noon. We would like everyone who can to please come and contribute to this meeting. Mike Helm is the consultant for this grant, and Deuce Niven is on the committee.

- B. The Environmental Health Fees that were presented to the Board at an earlier meeting by Kim Smith, Health Director, and William Horne, Environmental Inspector, and tabled, needs to be addressed again. I think the proposed fees are to bring the County in line with the new State Policy. I would like for the Clerk to place this item on the Agenda for our next meeting.

Agenda Item #13. CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. §143-318.11 (6):

Deleted.

RECOGNITION of DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Chairman Jacobs recognized all the Department Heads that were in attendance and asked if they would like to make any comments. The following Department Head spoke.

Ed Worley, Aging Director: I truly appreciate the support the Board of Commissioners give to the Department of Aging and our programs.

Agenda Item #14: ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:39 P.M., Commissioner Dutton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

SAMMIE JACOBS, Chairman

